

# Health Policy and Performance Board

## Annual Report

April 2021 - March 2022



I should firstly like to thank all staff, at all levels, for their sterling and unrelenting efforts throughout the difficulties of the last year, and indeed, during the whole of the Pandemic.

This very much includes all those in working Public Health involved in the very successful Halton Test and Vaccinations Centres, as well as carrying on with their normal work. It was a true baptism of fire for our new interim Director of Public Health & Protection!

I should also wish to thank my vice-chair, Councillor Sandra Baker, for her continuous support, and that of all members of the Health Policy & Performance Board, during this, my first year as chair.

Although this is essentially a report on the last year, it would seem inappropriate to ignore issues which will arise during the next six months.

The Health & Care Bill to establish the proposed Integrated Care structure has not yet been finally approved by Parliament, but nevertheless the new structure, Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Services, is already established, and, astonishingly, funding for some projects has already been allocated to it, a non- legal structure!

The overall funding is not yet known, but we do know that the local regional structure is larger than the model structure.

Will funding for this structure be based on the actual structure, or limited to that of the model? How much will the funding be for the individual Places, or boroughs, such as Halton? What funding will be made available for Adult Social Care services, as Adult Social Care is not part of the integrated services? This is intended to be very much part of the local Place services, but how will this work out in practice, as Adult Social Care services are not included in the Bill's definition of Integrated Care?

The Board and I are very keen to understand the answers to these questions, and others, and will be monitoring developments closely.

We live in uncertain and troubling times!

*Cllr Peter Lloyd Jones, Chair*

## **Health Policy and Performance Board Membership and Responsibility**

### **The Board:**

Councillor Peter Lloyd Jones (Chair)  
Councillor Sandra Baker (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Angela Ball  
Councillor Laura Bevan  
Councillor Eddie Dourley  
Councillor Dave Cargill  
Councillor Andrew Dyer  
Councillor Rosie Leck  
Councillor Margaret Ratcliffe  
Councillor Louise Goodall  
Councillor John Stockton

During 2021/22, David Wilson was Halton Healthwatch's co-opted representation on the Board and we would like to thank David for his valuable contribution.

The Lead Officer for the Board is Sue Wallace-Bonner, Director of Adult Social Services.

### **Responsibility:**

The primary responsibility of the Board is to focus on the work of the Council and its Partners, in seeking to improve health in the Borough. This is achieved by scrutinising progress against the aims and objectives outlined in the Council's Corporate Plan in relation to the Health priority.

The Board have met five times in 2021/22. Minutes of the meetings can be found on the [Halton Borough Council website](#). It should also be noted that the Board, at each of their meetings, receive and scrutinise the minutes from Halton's Health and Wellbeing Board and monitors work/progress within this area.

This report summarises some of the key pieces of work the Board have been involved in during 2021/22.

## **GOVERNMENT POLICY- NHS AND SOCIAL CARE REFORM**

### **White Paper – Integration and Innovation: Working Together to Improve Health & Social Care for All**

In February 2021, the Government published the above White Paper which set out legislative proposals for a Health and Care Bill which were due to be implemented by April 2022.

The Board received details of the proposals for NHS and social care reform, which focused on integrated care and services and although the White Paper recognised that the response to Covid-19 was the current priority, as the system emerged from the pandemic the legislative measures were aimed at assisting with the recovery by

bringing organisations together, removing barriers and enabling change and innovations.

Throughout the year, the Board have received regular updates on the development of the Integrated Care System and the impact that it would have within Halton and the resulting developments associated with the formation of the One Halton Partnership, including the One Halton place self-assessment against the Cheshire & Merseyside Development Framework and Transition programme to the new structure.

### **Staff Vaccination Regulations in Adult Care Homes**

In September 2021, the Board heard how the Government were introducing new regulations (came into force 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021) which meant that all persons entering Care Quality Commission registered care homes must be fully vaccinated. Although there were some exemptions, the implications of implementing the regulations were that those staff who were not fully vaccinated or refuse to be vaccinated who work within care homes, or are required to visit care homes as part of their role could not continue to be employed in that role.

Although this legislation was expected to reduce the health risks to care home residents and staff, it would introduce a number of consequential risks, which threatened the operation of local health and care systems. The report received by Members explained these risks and the immediate actions that were to be taken to prepare for possible workforce reductions to arise as a result of the legislation.

A follow up report was presented to the Board in November 2021, which provided an overview of the impact of the legislation had had on workforce numbers. The Board heard how the proactive work which had been done with staff since the regulation s had been announced meant that workforce reductions were able to be kept to a minimum.

Since being presented to the Board, the Government launched a consultation to revoke vaccination as a condition of deployment across all health and social care.

## **SERVICES**

### **Public Health Response to COVID-19 Coronavirus**

Throughout the past 12 months, the Board has received updates at every Board meeting from the Director of Public Health & Protection on current figures, data and activity, such a testing and vaccination activity, being undertaken within the Borough in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

### **Reconfiguration of Breast Screening, Assessment and Symptomatic Services - Warrington & Halton**

Following a period of pre-consultation engagement with the general public, in June 2021, the Board were provided with an overview of planned changes in respect to the Reconfiguration of Breast Screening, Assessment and Symptomatic Services across Warrington & Halton, which were believed would help improve the quality of the services offered and future proof the delivery of the service in future years.

In February 2022, the Board received an update which outlined that Phase 1 of the Breast Service reconfiguration was now complete and the Breast Assessment and

Symptomatic Clinics had been relocated from Warrington Hospital to Halton Hospital's Captain Sir Tom Moore Building, where a new £2.1m Breast Centre had been created on the ground floor. Phase 2 was now planned which involved consolidating and expanding Breast Screening Services at Bath Street, Warrington, by relocating Breast Screening Services from the Kendrick Wing at Warrington Hospital. Details of the consultation plan were provided, which the Board supported.

### **Palliative and End of Life Review**

Details were provided to the Board on the Palliative and End of Life project taking place within Halton.

The project had been ongoing since November 2020 following a successful funding bid from Macmillan Cancer Support. The work being undertaken within the project would support the requirements of Ambitions for Palliative and End of Life Care – a national framework for local action 2015-2020 and should provide Halton with a more integrated and co-ordinated provision of care for palliative patients and their families.

### **Intermediate Care & Frailty Service in Halton**

The Board continued to receive updates on implementation of a new model for the delivery of Intermediate Care & Frailty Services in the Borough.

The key aspects of the new Service is the introduction of a Single Point of Access and the integration of the previous frailty service provided by the Halton Integrated Frailty Service, with the ability to provide a Community Rapid Response within 2 hours, if assessed as necessary.

As outlined in the report the Service went live on the 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021, initially operating 9am – 5pm, Monday – Friday, with plans to rapidly increase hours of delivery, the aim of which is to deliver the Service from 8am - 8pm, 7 days a week by the end of March 2022.

The Board would continue to monitor progress with regards to this development.

### **Quality Assurance in Care Homes and Domiciliary Care in Halton**

In September 2021, the Board received a report which highlighted key issues with respect to Quality Assurance in Care Homes and Domiciliary Care.

The Board noted that during the pandemic both the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Halton's Quality Assurance Team had to amend the way that they supported the sector undertaking a risk assessment approach and alternative arrangements for assessing and monitoring and only 'crossing the threshold' in relation to serious safeguarding issues.

This had resulted in reduced intelligence and notifications received by the services, which also had an impact on reporting of ratings. It was noted that the Quality Assurance Team had now started to undertake safe and well visits and the CQC had resumed inspection activities.

### **Mental Health Services**

During 2021/22, the Board received updates on two developments within local mental health services – the current impact of the take-over by Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust of the former North West Boroughs (NWB) Healthcare Foundation Trust and the implementation of the national Mental Health Breathing Space Scheme (MHBS).

It was reported that so far the take-over by Mersey Care of the former NWB had made very little impact locally on front line service delivery. A local multi-agency health partnership board was being re-established, which would include Mersey Care, and would make the transmission of information and service developments easier.

Members were provided details of the MHBS which was introduced by central Government and implemented in May 2021. The Scheme aimed to provide people who were in debt and who qualified for the scheme, with a period of respite during which they could not be pursued by their creditors until their debts had been addressed by a specialist debt adviser.

### **The Standards for Employers of Social Workers and the Social Work Health Check (Adult Social Care)**

Information was presented to the Board in relation to the Standards for Employers of Social Workers in England, which was published by the Local Government Association (LGA).

It was reported that a self-assessment exercise had been undertaken locally to establish Halton's performance in relation to the Standards and staff had also taken part in the Social Work Health Check survey, which was required under one of the employer standards. Overall the results present were very positive.

The Board noted that approximately 40% of staff had responded to the survey and the aim would be to undertake the exercise again during 2021 as it was being run on an annual basis, so we would be able to check on any areas which needed to be improved. Outcomes of further surveys would be presented to the Board.

### **Transforming Cancer Care - Eastern Sector Cancer Hub**

In October 2021, a special meeting of the Board took place to consider proposals relating to the establishment of a Cancer Hub at St Helens Hospital for Halton, Knowsley, St Helens and Warrington patients.

The Board was advised that commissioners in NHS Halton, NHS Knowsley, NHS St Helens and NHS Warrington Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and NHS England Specialised Commissioning had undertaken a review of non-surgical cancer care in the local area in line with the National Cancer Transformation Programme. The review was carried out via a structured evaluation approach following the NHS England Service Change Assurance Process, which had identified the most suitable site for the Hub would be at St Helens Hospital.

Members assessed whether the proposals constituted a substantial development or variation in the provision of health services for the residents of Halton; the Board confirmed that it did. As a result, it was advised that there would now be a joint scrutiny exercise with the other authorities affected by the proposals and that two members of

the Board would need to be nominated from within the Board membership to represent Halton at the Joint Scrutiny Committee.

At the time of writing this report, the joint scrutiny arrangements have not yet began as we are still waiting for further information from the CCG commissioners.

### **Improving Access to Primary Care Services**

In February 2022, the Board welcomed Dr David Wilson from Grove House Partnership who provided an update on current issues and activity in respect to access to Primary Care Service in Halton, particularly in respect to the local Primary Care Winter Access Plan, which consistent of four elements:-

- Expansion of General Practice appointments;
- Consistent offer across all Halton Practices for urgent/same day appointments;
- Data validation and improvement plans; and
- Community pharmacy consultation scheme.

Some debate took place in respect to some constituent's experiences in respect to ability to access appointments and the impact that the Pandemic had had on services, clinicians and the members of the public.

### **Suicide Prevention**

The effects of suicide are far reaching and have a devastating impact on families, friends, communities and colleagues. Suicide risk is greater in areas of deprivation, such as Halton, due to social and economic inequalities and the wider determinants of health.

In November 2021, the Board received an update in respect to the Suicide Prevention agenda within Halton.

The Board received details of the:-

- Public Health England Prevention and Promotion Mental health funding and it's use/outcomes;
- Work of Champs Public Health Collaborative;
- Core local activity, such as tackling Mental Health Stigma in men with Halton's Time to Change Hub; and
- Work being done with Mental Health Teams in Schools.

### **Homelessness Services**

The Board received an update on the Homelessness Service provision and activity during the Covid-19 pandemic. This included future service developments, highlighting agency engagement and activity towards reducing homelessness within the Borough.

Details were provided to the Board on the approach being taken by the Housing Solutions Team's to tackle homelessness and meeting the needs of vulnerable homeless clients. Data relating to the usage of commissioned provision and numbers of clients were also presented to the Board.

## **SCRUTINY REVIEWS**

At the Board's meeting in February 2021, it was agreed that the 2021/22 work topic would focus on the local implementation of the recommendations contained in the North West Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (NWADASS) Elected Member Commission report '*The impact of Covid-19 on People with Care and Support Needs, their Families, Carers and Communities*'.

At the time of writing this report, the outcome from the scrutiny review is still be assessed and will be presented to the Board meeting in June 2022.

## **PERFORMANCE**

The Health Policy and Performance Board has a key role in monitoring and scrutinising the performance of the Council in delivering outcomes against its key health priorities. Therefore, in line with the Council's performance framework, during the year the Board has been provided with thematic reports which have included information on progress against key performance indicators, milestones and targets relating to Health.

The Board also received details of the Halton Safeguarding Adult Board (HSAB) Annual Report for 2020/21 which was developed in conjunction with HSAB partners to ensure the report encompassed a multi-agency approach. The Report included performance data and comparisons between years, achievements in the year and highlighted some of the good practice taking place in the Borough.

In respect to Safeguarding, the Board also heard how the Pandemic had impacted on individuals, families, communities and wider society and how it had touched every part of people's lives and that many of the existing protective factors in the lives of adults at risk of abuse and harm had been temporarily absent or limited.

## **INFORMATION BRIEFING**

During 2021/22, the Board continued to receive an Information Briefing Bulletin in advance of each of the Board meetings.

The Information Briefing is a way of trying to manage the size of the agendas of the Board meetings better. Including information on topics which were previously presented to Board as reports only for the Board's information now into the Information Briefing bulletin allows the Board to focus more on areas where decisions etc. are needed.

Example of areas that have been included in the Information Briefing over the last 12 months have included:-

- Cheshire & Merseyside Acute Hospital Elective Recovery
- Healthwatch Halton Annual Report 2020-21
- Urgent Treatment Centres
- Blue Badge Policy

## **WORK TOPICS FOR 2022/23:**

At the meeting of the Board in February 2022, it was agreed that the focus of Scrutiny topic for 2022/23 would be on workforce, specifically in relation to the approaches taken to Adult Social Care workforce planning and the skills and training opportunities that are available for Adult Social Care provider staff.

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